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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Condemns the Israeli Plan to Forcibly Relocate Palestinians to Camps in Rafah

July 16, 2025, Washington D.C.- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) rejects the Israeli government's revealed plan to forcibly concentrate hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into camps built atop the ruins of Rafah. The proposal would confine more than 600,000 displaced Palestinians, without freedom of movement or any viable means of return, into a militarized encampment, with the explicit intention of facilitating their departure from Gaza. Such a policy amounts to the furtherance of ethnic cleansing and represents a grave violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention's prohibition of forced displacement.

The plan itself only exists because the Israeli military has already reduced Rafah, once home to hundreds of thousands of people, to rubble through relentless bombardment and systematic bulldozing. The idea that those who have already endured unspeakable loss and violence should now be herded into camps is morally abhorrent. It is an assault on human dignity, justice, and every international norm meant to protect civilian life during conflict.

We utterly reject any further displacement of the Palestinian people. CMEP calls on the global Church, the international community, and especially the U.S. government, whose financial and military support underpins these actions, to speak out and act decisively. The Church cannot remain silent. There must be a concerted campaign to exert diplomatic pressure to put an immediate halt to this plan, robust international accountability, and a recommitment to peace rooted in the rights and

dignity of all people in the land.

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Formed in 1984, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is a coalition of more than 30 national church communions and organizations, including Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical traditions that works to encourage US policies that actively promote a comprehensive resolution to conflicts in the Middle East with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. CMEP works to mobilize US Christians to embrace a holistic perspective and to be advocates of equality, human rights, security, and justice for Israelis, Palestinians, and all people of the Middle East.

Recent CMEP Statements and Press Releases:

[July 15, 2025: Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Condemns the Killing of Palestinian-American Sayfollah Musallet](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) condemns the violent July 11, 2025 settler attack in the West Bank. Tragically, Sayfollah Musallet, a 20-year-old Palestinian American, and Mohammad Shalabi, a 23-year-old Palestinian were brutally killed. This deadly settler attack is not an isolated incident. Attacks in the West Bank have only been increasing, leading to the deaths of at least 7 American citizens. CMEP demands accountability, justice, and the immediate launch of an investigation by the American government.

[July 14, 2025: Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Elevates Statement by the Council of Patriarchs and Heads of Churches of Jerusalem Regarding the Latest Settler Attack on Taybeh](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) elevates the recent statement made by the Council of Patriarchs and Heads of Churches of Jerusalem condemning the latest settler attack against the Christian community of Taybeh. We mourn the lives lost and the homes and churches burned. Intimidation and violence against Christian communities in the Holy Land has been steadily increasing due to intensified Israeli efforts to establish settlements. CMEP urges the international community to act against these atrocities and support the continued presence of Christians in the Holy Land.

[July 9, 2025: CMEP Condemns the Israeli Settler Attack Against the Palestinian Christian Village of Taybeh](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) condemns the most recent attack by Israeli settlers on the Palestinian Christian village of Taybeh, where on July 7, 2025, settlers deliberately set fire near the

town cemetery and the historic Church of Saint George, dating back to the 5th century. This violent act, thwarted only by the intervention of local residents and firefighters, is part of what local Christian clergy describe as “a series of dangerous, systematic attacks” against the village’s land, holy sites, and people. Taybeh, historically known as Ephraim, is the last entirely Christian town in the West Bank, and these assaults represent not only a grave threat to its security but a direct effort to undermine the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

[July 8, 2025: CMEP Joins more than 200 Humanitarian Organizations in Condemning Israel’s Militarized Aid Distribution Scheme in Gaza](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins more than 200 humanitarian organizations in calling for the immediate end to Israel’s deadly, military-controlled aid distribution scheme in Gaza and the restoration of a unified, UN-led humanitarian coordination mechanism. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, now responsible for food delivery, has replaced 400 community-based distribution points with only four militarized sites, turning the desperate pursuit of food into a death sentence. Since the scheme’s implementation, over 500 Palestinians have been killed and nearly 4,000 injured while simply trying to survive.

[July 1, 2025: CMEP Calls for Release of Unlawfully Detained Palestinian Medical Personnel](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins twenty four other civil society organizations in calling for the release of the unlawfully detained Palestinian medical workers in Gaza and the West Bank. This includes doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals working for international humanitarian organizations such as MedGlobal and Children Not Numbers.

See all of our [public statements](#) and [press releases](#).

Contact Us

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